

Pentecostal Pastor Leads Tent Revival in the Hamptons

✖ A Pentecostal pastor is holding an old-fashioned tent revival in an unlikely location: the affluent Southampton community on Long Island, N.Y.

"We're going to take it in the Pentecostal and charismatic tradition of tent meetings—laying hands on the sick, [praying for] miracles," said Frank A. White, pastor of 350-member King's Chapel Church of God in Christ in Southampton. "We're believing to make a joyful sound that Jesus saves."

The revival, which began Monday night and runs through Sunday, is being held in a 500-seat tent on Sunrise Highway, a main road into the Hamptons. Because school begins after Labor Day in New York, a vacation Bible school is being held each morning, followed by a noontime prayer meeting and an evening revival service.

White, a former Wall Street executive who now serves as financial secretary for the 6 million-member Church of God in Christ (COGIC), said the outreach is meant to bring hope in uncertain times.

"With the economic quagmire, with the health crises and all the issues that people are facing on a daily basis, this is a great time to have what will be called a Celebration on Sunrise," said White, who is also pastor of Zion Cathedral COGIC in Freeport, N.Y.

"There will be preaching of the gospel, which of course is good news," he added. "If a person is sick, the good news is that you can be whole, you can be healed. If you're down, the good news is you can be delivered and brought back to proper standing with God."

White, who has been a pastor in Southampton for the last decade, said God led him to make evangelism a major thrust this year. Although he notes that not all of the town's residents are affluent, he says it's wrong for ministers to present Christ as only for those who are down and out, which he says Pentecostal preachers often do.

"Many times we present Jesus to only one crowd, to one matrix—if you're down, if you're busted, if you're disgusted, if you're on crack," he said "But we never talk about Jesus to the nuclear physicist, to the biochemist, to the brain surgeon."

"That's the beauty of what we're doing," he added. "We're presenting Jesus Christ to the affluent as well as to those who are in need because no matter who you are, where you are, what level of life you are living in, you still need Jesus."

White admits there was some opposition to the outreach from town leaders. "It is the favor of God that opened up this door," he said, noting that it cost the church \$25,000 just to secure the land the tent sits on.

But he believes dozens will come to Christ this week. White already has plans to hold an outdoor baptism service next Monday evening.

"It will be tremendous empowerment experience," he said, "a celebration."